

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

EX-MAYOR WM. H. FURBER,

IN THE

HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING,

SOMERVILLE,

July 4, 1876.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.



BOSTON:

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE.

IN BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN, July 10, 1876.

ORDERED :—

That the Committee on Printing be, and they are hereby authorized to cause five hundred copies of Hon. William H. Furler's address, delivered the fourth instant, before the City Government and the citizens, to be published for distribution.

J. B. DAVID.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, July 10, 1876.

Received its first and second reading and final passage. Sent down for concurrence.

GEORGE I. VINCENT, *Clerk pro tem.*

IN COMMON COUNCIL, July 13, 1876.

Received its first and second reading and final passage in concurrence.

SOLOMON DAVIS, *Clerk.*



15 Feb 1877

ADDRESS.

*Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen of the City Council, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Citizens of Somerville:*

On the 25th of May last, the following proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, viz :

Whereas, a joint resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States was duly approved on the 13th day of March last which resolution is as follows : "Be it resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, that it be, and is hereby recommended by the Senate and House of Representatives, to the people of the several States, that they assemble in their several Counties or Towns, on the approaching Centennial Anniversary of our National Independence, and that they cause to have delivered on such day an historical sketch of said County or Town from its formation, and that a copy of said sketch may be filed in print or manuscript in the Clerk's Office of said County, and an additional copy, in print or manuscript, be filed in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, to the intent that a complete record may thus be obtained of the progress of our institutions during the first centennial of their existence." And whereas it is deemed proper that such recommendation be brought to the notice and knowledge of the people of the United States, now, therefore, I, Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States, do hereby declare and make known the same, in the hope that the object of such resolution may meet the approval of the people of the United States, and that proper steps may be taken to carry the same into effect. Given under my hand at the City of Washington, the 25th of May, in the year of our Lord 1876, and of the Independence of the United States, the one hundredth.

By the President,

U. S. GRANT.

HAMILTON FISH, *Secretary of State.*

Our State Government acting in accordance with Congress, passed an order to transmit to the clerks of the several cities and towns in the Commonwealth, a copy of the joint resolution referred to.

In full sympathy with the request of Congress and the Chief Executive of the Nation (as expressed in the proclamation and resolve), and the action of the State Government, the City

Council of Somerville appointed a Joint Select Committee, with full powers to act in consonance therewith, which committee have honored me with an invitation to undertake the task. I should have been proud to have taken even a *less* conspicuous part in the observance of this Centennial Anniversary of American Independence, but the short time allotted me to perform so important a work (only nine secular days intervening since the date of invitation), it was with extreme reluctance that I accepted the proffered honor, knowing well that the interval was much too brief, in which to prepare a complete historic sketch of a town or city, even less active and progressive than our own. With this brief statement, I trust that any errors of omission or commission will receive your charitable consideration.

It is *required* that this shall be an *historic sketch*, and as statistics must, of necessity, enter largely into its composition, it must necessarily be somewhat prosy in character.

Somerville embraces a territory of about four square miles, and comprises an area of about twenty-seven hundred acres. It was formerly a part of Charlestown, besides which, Charlestown originally included Malden, Woburn, Stoneham and Burlington, a large part of Medford, and a small part of Cambridge, Arlington and Reading. In 1637 the town of Charlestown paid thirty-six shillings to Squaw Sachem and Web Cowet, for land now a part of Somerville; and in 1639, on the fifteenth of the second month, Charlestown also purchased of the same Indians, a large tract of land, which embraced a part of what is now Somerville and Arlington, for twenty-one coats, nineteen fathoms of wampum and three bushels of corn, the Indians reserving to their use their old fishing places and hunting grounds during the life of the Squaw.

Within the limits of Somerville are located Temple's Farm (now known as Ten Hills), Quarry Hill, Ploughed Hill, Winter, Prospect and Cobble Hills, all of which are memorable spots and are certainly worthy of centennial note.

On the sixth of September, 1630, a grant of 600 acres of Temple's Farm was made to Governor John Winthrop; on the shore of this farm, the first vessel built within the limits of Massachusetts Colony was constructed, a barque of thirty tons, named the "Blessing of the Bay," which was launched on the 4th of July, 1631, and, although this is the two hundred and forty-fifth anniversary of the event, a portion of the ways used for the purpose is still visible.

Situated on what was known as "Quarry Hill" is the old Powder House in which during Revolutionary times, was stored the powder of the province. This fact having been communicated to the British General Gage, he determined to secure it and on the 1st of September, 1774, despatched two hundred and sixty troops under command of Lieutenant Colonel Madison for that purpose. They embarked at Long Wharf, Boston, in thirteen boats, landed at Temple's Farm, crossed over Winter Hill, seized the powder (two hundred and fifty barrels), placed it on board the boats, and conveyed it to Castle William. This fact becoming known created great excitement and indignation among the people, and it was with difficulty that they were persuaded to abandon an attempt to recapture it.

In 1775, on each of the other hills mentioned, hastily constructed forts or redoubts were located for the protection of American troops, some of which proved exceedingly annoying to the British.

It was on Prospect Hill on the 18th of July, 1775, that General Putnam raised his celebrated flag, bearing on one side the motto: "An appeal to Heaven," and on the reverse, the three vines (which are the armorial bearings of Connecticut), and the motto of that State, and on this hill also, was hoisted on New Year's day, 1776, and saluted with thirteen guns, the Union Flag bearing thirteen stripes.

In November, 1777, after the defeat of Burgoyne, his troops as prisoners of war, occupied barracks on Prospect and Winter Hills.

On Cobble Hill, now occupied by the McLean Asylum, a fortification was planned by General Putnam and Colonel Knox, and the work commenced on the 22d of November, 1775. This was so well devised and constructed, that when finished it was named "Putnam's impregnable fortress."

Having taken a cursory glance at the colonial history of the section of country occupied by Somerville, let us ascertain the motive that induced the people of the locality to sever their connection with Charlestown, and form an independent organization.

Being somewhat isolated from the central and densely populated portion of the town, with its people largely devoted to agricultural pursuits, their wants and wishes were treated with a careless indifference, or almost wholly neglected by the town government; this created unrest and dissatisfaction among the people located above that section termed the "Neck," and known as the westerly part of the town. It was the same old story, "taxation without representation," or in other words, being compelled to bear a liberal share of the current expenses of the town, without receiving in return a just and equitable proportion of the benefits derived from the money expended.

This state of things continued, until "forbearance ceased to be a virtue;" it was talked over by the roadside, in the counting house and in the family circle, and was soon to culminate in a more independent and better plan of operations.

On the twenty-second day of November, 1841, a meeting of the inhabitants of the westerly part of the town was held at the Prospect Hill School House, for the purpose of ascertaining their minds in regard to a division of the town. Captain Joseph Miller was chosen chairman, and Edwin Munroe, Jr., secretary.

At this meeting the grievances of the people were freely discussed, and after due deliberation a committee of seven was chosen to notify the inhabitants of the subject under consideration, obtain their views respecting the same, and request them to attend the next meeting to be held on the Monday evening following, to

which time they adjourned. In accordance with the adjournment, they met at the same place with augmented numbers and greater enthusiasm; and after properly introducing the subject which they had assembled to discuss, a committee of six was appointed to ascertain the amount of tax borne by the westerly part of the town, and also the amount of money expended in that section. After which they adjourned to the following Friday evening. Promptly at the place designated, the people assembled to listen to the report of their committee, on which so much necessarily depended.

The committee reported that the aggregate tax for the year was (as near as they could ascertain) \$34,093.76, and the amount assessed upon the westerly part of the town \$5,687.78, thus requiring that section to bear about one-sixth of the entire tax, without receiving anything like commensurate benefits, and the committee expressed the opinion, that the affairs of the locality could be as well if not better managed at an annual cost of \$5500.

The report was accepted and adopted. It was then voted to have one thousand copies printed for the use of the inhabitants, and a committee of ten was chosen to distribute the reports.

They were also authorized to procure the names of all inhabitants whose views were favorable to an independent organization, and to use all fair and honorable means to secure a division of the town, with power to employ counsel if needed. The meeting was then adjourned subject to the call of said committee.

The committee feeling that they had an important work entrusted to them, with commendable alacrity met at once, and voted to district the territory in question into five different parts, assigning a part to every two members of the committee, that the work might be more quickly and thoroughly performed. They also voted to procure counsel, that the legal rights of the citizens might be fully protected, and that no effort might be spared to secure immunity from the imposition under which the people of that locality felt they were suffering.

A second meeting of the committee was held the Monday following, at which it was voted that Walford should be the name of the new town, subject to an alteration by a majority of the committee, that being the name of the first white man resident of Charlestown. They then adjourned for one week, when they again met and after an earnest discussion, it was voted to abandon the name of Walford and adopt that of Somerville.

A petition signed by Guy C. Hawkins and other citizens, and one signed by the non-resident real estate owners, praying that the westerly part of the town of Charlestown (which was properly defined) might be set off from said Charlestown, and incorporated as the town of Somerville, were duly presented and advocated before the General Court, and no one, not a member of the Legislature, pressed the request of the petitioners with more zeal and energy than Hon. George O. Brastow who had at that time but just taken up his abode in the disaffected section. The result was the passage of the Act of Incorporation, approved by the Governor, March 3, 1842, which, however, by changing the eastern boundary line from the canal bridge, so called, to the present line, gave her less territory and less population than contemplated by the petitions presented, but sufficient to entitle her to one representative in the General Court. On the 5th of March, 1842, Ephraim Bat-trick, Esq., of East Cambridge, issued the first warrant for a meeting of the inhabitants to be held on the fourteenth day of March, 1842, at the Prospect Hill School House, to Charles E. Gilman, the present efficient city clerk, who has held the positions of town and city clerks successively since the first organization of the town government. A preliminary meeting of the voters was held on the tenth day of March, 1842, and nominated the following town officers: for Selectmen, Nathan Tufts, John S. Edgerly, Caleb W. Leland, Levi Russell and Luther Mitchell; for Treasurer and Collector, Edmund Tufts; for Town Clerk, Charles E. Gilman; all of whom were elected at the meeting held on the 14th of March, 1842, together with the other requisite town officers.

Nathan Tufts was chosen chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and Levi Russell subsequently declining to serve as a member of the board, Francis Bowman was elected in his stead.

Thus organized, with a total valuation of \$988,513, and a population of 1013, which included a school population of less than 300, with one grammar and five primary schools, no church edifice erected within her borders, with less than 200 dwellings, no stores, and only one manufactory, relying upon a single old-style tub engine, with a voluntary company for protection against fire, the new town of Somerville severed her connection with the mother town, and with bright hopes and lofty aspirations entered upon her new and untried destiny.

To ascertain how well she has performed her part during the thirty-four years of her existence let us look at her record (though the examination must necessarily be a hasty one), and notice some of the principal events in which she has taken part that we may, with some degree of accuracy, mark the progress she has made and accord her the credit to which she is entitled.

The first meeting after the organization of the town was held April 4, 1842, when it was voted to make the following *comparatively modest* appropriations for the current year, namely: for support of schools, \$1800; support of highways, \$2000; county tax, \$450; support of poor, \$200; contingencies, \$300; total amount appropriated, \$4750; four-fifths of the amount, it will be seen, to be devoted to the education of the youth and the improvement of the roads.

Fully believing in the moral and religious culture of the sons and daughters within her borders as indispensable to the success and prosperity of the people, every effort has been made from year to year to encourage and secure such an acquisition, and the religious and educational advantages of the town and city have steadily improved, until prosperous societies of the several religious denominations, with comfortable church edifices, are located in our midst, and our public schools rank among the very best in the Commonwealth.

The first assembly for public worship met on the third Sunday of March, A. D., 1844, in an upper room of a building on the corner of Washington and Prospect Streets, and consisted of the representatives of about thirty families, but the first church edifice erected in the town was the Unitarian church, built of wood, on what is now called Highland Avenue, which was dedicated September 3, 1845, and the first sermon after its dedication was preached September 7, 1845, by the Rev. John T. Sargent, of Boston. This structure as well as its successor were consumed by fire, and the present brick church was erected on the site and appropriately dedicated on the thirty-first day of January, 1869.

By an act of the Legislature, April 4, 1850, a Fire Department was established in Somerville, and soon after a new Fire Engine and Hose Carriage were purchased which were a much needed security in this direction.

The first eight years of the town's history showed an increase in valuation of \$1,114,800, making the total valuation in 1850, \$2,102,631, a gain of more than one hundred per cent.; and the population during the same interval increased about two hundred and fifty per cent., the aggregate number of inhabitants in 1850, being 3540, which included a school population of 781. At that time there were eight school buildings, containing ten schools, an increase of four, three of which were grammar schools.

In 1851, the first Directory was published by Edmund Tufts, an unpretending little book, pocket-size, of thirty-two pages only, and contained the names of heads of families in Somerville, 590 in number.

On the 7th of April, 1851, the erection of the first High School building was authorized, the corner stone of which was laid September 9th following, and the dedication took place on the 28th of April, 1852. On the following Monday, the school was opened with sixty-six pupils.

During the year 1853, four additional ecclesiastical societies were established in the town, one each of the following denomi-

nations, namely : Orthodox, Methodist, Baptist and Universalist, showing conclusively that church and school accommodations were, from natural causes, easily made to keep pace with each other.

In 1853, the Somerville Light Infantry was incorporated and organized.

February 23, 1853, by an act of the General Court, the Charlestown Gas Company was allowed to extend its pipes into the town, and similar authority was granted to the Cambridge Gas Company, under date of April 11, 1853. This luxury many residents at once availed themselves of. April 13, 1854, the Somerville Gas Light Company was incorporated, but as the wants of the people have been well provided for in this direction up to the present day by the two companies previously named, the last named company has never commenced operations.

On the 29th of April, 1854, the Middlesex Horse Railroad Company was incorporated, and the road soon after completed from Boston to the eastern boundary of the town, and put in active operation. A charter was also granted May 15, 1855, to the Medford and Charlestown Horse Railroad Company, and one on the 29th of May, 1857, to the Somerville Horse Railroad Company, and in the month of July following, the roads of both were finished and in complete operation, the line of the former extending from the termini of the Middlesex Horse Railroad along the northerly side of the town to Medford, and that of the latter running from West Somerville, through the southern section, to Charlestown boundary line, and both connecting with the Middlesex Horse Railroad, thus furnishing a direct line of communication from the several sections of the town to the great metropolis of the State. This mode of travel being so far superior to the omnibus method, on which the people for years had to a large extent been dependent, quickly superseded it. In addition to these advantages, judicious improvements had been annually made in the streets and highways, which then covered an extent of more

than thirty miles. Reservoirs were constructed, as additional safeguards in case of fire; postal facilities extended and the sanitary condition of the town carefully watched.

In 1860 the entire population of the town was 8025, a gain in ten years of more than 125 per cent., while the advance in valuation during the same decade was about 187 per cent., the total valuation in 1860 being \$6,033,053. The school population at that time numbered about 1500, and the number of schools had increased in ten years from ten to twenty-two, including one High and four Grammar Schools. The number of teachers then employed was thirty.

Thus steadily and surely did the town continue to grow and prosper, and thus the year 1859 closed its record and the account of its successor opened. Encouraged by the past, the people of Somerville looked forward to the future with brilliant anticipations, and with little thought that the great war cloud, which hung suspended over the entire country, was so soon to burst, and from which would descend upon them their share of the dread results and responsibilities that must necessarily follow a fratricidal war; but when the summons came they did not waver, or shrink from the duty devolving upon them.

In obedience to the call of President Lincoln for the first three months troops, Governor Andrew ordered into service the Fifth Regiment, to which was attached the Somerville Light Infantry, and promptly did they respond, leaving their quiet and peaceful homes on the 19th of April, 1861, with full ranks, under command of Captain George O. Brastow, to join their regiment, which was sent directly to Washington to aid in the defence of the threatened Capitol.

The time of the regiment was spent in guarding the Treasury building and constructing Fort Ellsworth on Shuters Hill, and it also participated in the first battle of Bull Run, returning home shortly after its term of service had expired.

Early in 1862 the regiment was *again* hastily ordered to be in

readiness for marching orders to the front, and the company, under command of Captain Robinson with a full complement of officers and men, was the second to report for duty; and although the regiment was prepared to leave in a few hours, the exigency had passed, and the several companies returned to their homes, ready to meet the next call in defence of the country, which was so soon to follow, for on the 28th of June following came the startling call for 300,000 more, and the Fifth Regiment tendered its services. On the nineteenth day of September in the same year, the regiment entered the service for nine months, and the Somerville Light Infantry under command of Captain B. F. Parker, with full numbers, joined the regiment, which without unnecessary delay left for Newbern, N. C., its field of operations, where it did faithful service, engaging in several battles and patiently enduring the toil and suffering incident to the active life of a soldier.

In addition to the service rendered by the Somerville Light Infantry already mentioned, a full company for three years' service was raised in the town and organized, with Frederick R. Kinsley as Captain. This company was attached to the Thirty-ninth Regiment and served faithfully and fearlessly in the army of the Potomac. Captain Kinsley was promoted to Major and Colonel, and after glorious work in the final contest returned home in command of the regiment; but his brother, Captain Willard C. Kinsley (who had fairly won promotion from a Lieutenancy), with twenty-four other brave men, one-fourth of the company, sacrificed their lives, either upon the field, in the hospital, or amid the horrors of a military prison, and the monument erected by the citizens in the cemetery of the town, bears humble testimony to the fidelity and valor of these and other Somerville patriots whose lives were given in defence of the nation.

Again, in July, 1864, did the Somerville Light Infantry join the indomitable Fifth Regiment, this time for an hundred days under command of Captain Coffin, which proceeded to the front, and by its service added fresh lustre to its brilliant history. Besides these full and complete companies furnished by the town,

hundreds of men from Somerville were to be found actively participating, either in the army or navy, in the great struggle which was shaking the country from centre to circumference, and calling forth the stoutest energies of a powerful people. The whole number of men furnished for the war by Somerville in the different arms of service was 1135, forty of whom were commissioned officers. 250 men were wounded and 98 were killed or died from causes incident to the war. Not only did the town contribute men freely, but provided money for the national struggle with a lavish hand; furnishing for war purposes, \$201,382.80, \$65,822.50 of which was the free-will offering of the citizens; the balance, \$135,560.30, being raised from time to time by the proper authority of the town. And great credit is due those who had charge of its affairs at the time, for the very able and efficient manner in which they met the *new* responsibilities of the hour. And I must not omit to mention (though *last* in this connection not by any means the *least*) the noble and devoted women of Somerville, who toiled and suffered during those weary years, caring for the sick and wounded, sending not only messages of love, sympathy and encouragement to those at the front, but, regardless of their personal comfort, earnestly endeavoring to learn their several needs and anxiously striving to anticipate and supply them.

I have thus hastily sketched the action of the people of Somerville during the years of civil war, and although the contest was ended years ago, there still rests upon us all a sacred obligation and duty towards those maimed and needy soldiers and those dependent upon them, now living within our borders, which should *never* be neglected.

Notwithstanding the heavy burdens imposed by the war, the people were not wholly disheartened, but continued to make all reasonable improvements. April 4, 1863, the Somerville Horse Railroad Company secured the passage of an act authorizing them to extend their line from Union Square to East Cambridge boundary, and the road was completed and put in operation the year following.

In 1863, ninety-two street lamps were furnished by the abutters in different sections of the place, and were located and lighted at the expense of the town, thus providing an additional luxury which was fully appreciated.

On the 26th of March, 1866, a new apportionment of Representatives was authorized by the Legislature, and Somerville and Malden were made the fourth Representative District, which District was entitled to three Representatives.

On the 3d of May, 1866, an act was passed giving Charlestown the right to supply water to Somerville and Malden.

On the 26th of May, 1866, the first steam fire engine was added to the Fire Department.

The population and property had at this time increased to such an extent in some sections of the town, that additional protection at night seemed to be demanded, and early in the year 1867 a night watch was first established.

The question of Pure Water supply also began to agitate the minds of the people, and at the town meeting held November 7, 1867, a committee was appointed to confer with the Charlestown authorities relative to contracting with them for a supply of Mystic water, and report at the next town meeting.

At a meeting held on the thirteenth day of April, 1868, the committee reported, stating the terms upon which a supply could be obtained, and proposed the election of a committee to be called the "Somerville Mystic Water Committee," with power to obtain the necessary legislative enactments to conclude a contract with the Water Commissioners, and to make any arrangements relative to the introduction, distribution and supply of the water, as should be consistent with the best interests of the town.

The report was accepted and adopted, and it was voted that the committee for that year consist of Aaron Sargent, C. E. Rymes, R. A. Vinal, R. E. Demmon and Cutler Downer, and that the sum of \$30,000 be appropriated for the purpose.

The committee went to work in earnest and secured the passage of the Act of May 14, 1868, which gave to the town the authority

needed to proceed with the work, and authorized its raising, by taxation or borrowing for the purpose, \$100,000. At a town meeting held September 18, 1868, it was voted to accept the act, and the committee previously appointed were empowered to carry the same into effect. That they were active and energetic, and fully entitled to the thanks of the community, is shown by the fact that an agreement was made with the city of Charlestown on the 21st of the same month, the work of laying the pipe commenced on the 6th of October following, and before the close of that year some two and a half miles of distribution pipe had been laid, thereby securing to the inhabitants early in 1869, the introduction of pure water, the value of which, to any town or city, cannot easily be overestimated. Thus, step by step, has Somerville kept pace with the wants and requirements of the people, and in this I think it must be admitted lies one of the secrets of success of every town or municipality.

During ten years ending with 1869, eight school houses were erected, sewers were constructed, miles of water pipe laid, and the general improvement of the town continued. And during this period a gain in valuation of over one hundred per cent. was produced, the total valuation in 1870 being \$12,590,900, the population then numbering 14,693, a gain during the ten years of about 83 per cent. and including a school population of 2739, this during an interval when the nation was engaged in the greatest civil war ever known. Still the motto of Somerville was "onward."

To increase its water supply, authority was obtained from the Legislature under date of March 11, 1870, for a further issue of water bonds to the extent of \$100,000. On the 15th of March, 1870, in anticipation of the wants of the community, an act incorporating a savings bank was secured; but this proved somewhat premature, as up to this time the corporation, though organized, has never commenced operations.

In 1870, the police force was increased and regularly organized,

with a chief, captain, two lieutenants and a clerk; and early in 1871 a day patrol was first established.

On the 3d of December, 1870, the first issue of the *Somerville Journal* appeared, and was the first newspaper published in the town. It has improved in size and appearance and still continues to meet the wants of the community.

In 1871, the graduates and members of the High School formed an association for social, scientific and literary purposes, and secured an act of incorporation under date of February 20, 1871, and have done much to add to the social and intellectual culture of the place.

In 1871, the steam fire engine house on Highland Avenue was completed, and the hose house on Marshall Street was commenced.

The population of the town at this time had become so large, and their wants so numerous and varied, that the machinery of a town government seemed unwieldy and ill adapted to secure to the people equal rights and even-handed justice, and steps were taken to secure a delegated form of government, that more perfect equity might be secured to the citizens in the administration of their affairs. A petition was therefore presented to the Legislature early in 1871, asking for a city charter, which resulted in the passage of the act to establish the city of Somerville, approved April 14, 1871, subject, however, to its adoption by a majority of its voters, voting upon the subject within sixty days from the date of the act. A town meeting was accordingly held on the 27th of April, 1871, and the vote was about two to one in favor of the change.

The act prescribed that the election of city officers should take place on the first Monday of December, and the municipal year to begin the first Monday of January following.

This was the most important step that the people had taken since the town was organized, and was calculated to have an important bearing upon the future progress of the place. But few there were who failed to see the great advantages to be derived

from the change, and the new regime was looked forward to by most of the people with satisfaction and pleasure.

Fully alive to the wants of the community, at the meeting of the town held April 27, 1871, a committee of sixteen was appointed to consider and report a plan for operating a public library, and on the 7th of November following reported in favor of establishing a public library under the management of nine trustees, and also presented a form of by-laws and regulations for its government, all of which met the approval of the people and were adopted.

On Monday, the fourth day of December 1871, the election of city officers took place, and as the views of the people respecting their first selection, were comparatively harmonious, with little or no struggle among aspirants for positions, with which was coupled an *unusual* amount of labor, the event was attended with but little excitement and resulted in the election of Hon. George O. Brastow for mayor, together with the other officers required by the charter, and on Monday, the first day of January, 1872, the new city government was formally inaugurated. A choice was made of Charles E. Gilman, Esq., for city clerk, and the present worthy treasurer, Aaron Sargent, Esq., for city treasurer. Thus in the selection of these two officers was manifested a special care for the new city's interest at the very outset. The fact that the old method of managing the affairs of the people, which had been adhered to for nearly thirty years, was to be abandoned, the day was made the occasion for some unusual demonstrations, and accordingly a salute was fired at the close of the inauguration ceremonies, and in the evening a grand ball was given in honor of the event.

Under these favorable auspices did those who had been entrusted with the management of the city's interests commence their labors, and the task before them was certainly no mere pastime. Besides the natural wants of a rapidly increasing community which occupied much of the time of the several committees to whom they were referred, the City Council were required

to frame rules and orders for their own guidance—enact laws and ordinances for the protection of the property and the rights of the citizens, lay out new roads and improve old ones, provide additional school accommodations, and improve the sanitary condition of the several sections of the city.

To accomplish all that devolved upon them necessitated meetings once a week, and the midnight hour frequently found them diligently at work for the public weal.

In February, 1872, this beautiful High School building which we now occupy, was completed and dedicated on the 27th of the same month, and from which is annually seen to graduate some two score of the cultured youth of the city, well fitted to adorn any position in life which they may be called upon to fill.

The first High School building having been superseded by the new structure, it was converted into the *first* City Hall.

To enable the city to further extend its water pipes, it became necessary to make another issue of bonds, and legislative sanction was obtained by an act dated March 19, 1872, authorizing the issuing of additional water bonds to the amount of \$200,000, making the total amount authorized \$400,000. With the means thus secured the demand of the citizens for a supply of pure water was largely satisfied.

The constant growth of the city and the large increase in its population, brought with them their accompanying trials, and it was deemed advisable to have a police court established in the city, which was authorized by an act of the Legislature, April 23, 1872, and the Hon. Isaac Story was appointed standing justice, with Lebbeus Stetson, clerk, and without delay a room in the City Hall building was fitted up for this new department.

To improve the sanitary condition of the city, and to provide a better system of drainage, the legislative act of May 3, 1872, was secured, which authorized the filling of all low lands within the city to a grade not less than thirteen feet above mean low water. About this time the waters of Miller's river, which flowed along the southern boundary of the city, had become so polluted by the

deposits of the slaughtering establishments along its banks, that the locality had gained an unenviable notoriety, and had become dangerous to the public health. With a view to remedy this great and rapidly increasing evil, the legislative act of May 6, 1872, was passed, constituting the Harbor Commissioners and the State Board of Health a board of commissioners to devise some plan for the abatement of the nuisance, and patiently and thoroughly did they labor to perform the duty assigned them.

Besides these measures that had been secured for the benefit of the people of Somerville, by the unremitting labors of its first city government, miles of brick sidewalks were laid, school houses improved, a more comprehensive plan of sewerage adopted, and great improvements made in the highways, roads and bridges.

The government of 1873 had at its head the same efficient executive, and but little change was made in the officers comprising the City Council.

On the 20th of May, 1873, authority was obtained of the Legislature to drain into Alewife Brook, but it was subsequently deemed inexpedient to act under its provisions, and other plans were adopted.

The commission appointed a year previous to devise a plan for the abatement of the Miller's river nuisance, so called, reported, recommending the filling up of certain parts of the river, and one of the most important steps taken by the government of 1873 was to secure the passage of the act of the Legislature, May 23, 1873, authorizing the cities of Cambridge and Somerville to fill up Miller's river, and construct a trunk sewer through Milk and Bridge Streets to deep water at Cragie bridge.

The magnitude of the work, the benefits to be derived from its successful completion, and the difficulty attending its consummation could hardly be estimated at the time of its inception.

A contract for the construction of that part of the sewer devolving upon Somerville to build was made without delay, and the work commenced early in the fall of that year, and continued as long as the season would permit.

On the first day of May, 1873, the public library with 2386 volumes upon its shelves, was thrown open to the people, thus adding another to the many attractions of the city.

Although much extra labor was required the year previous, to set the wheels of a new government in motion, each successive year brought with it new cares and responsibilities, and the representatives of the people found little or no respite from the labors assumed, but worked faithfully and diligently to the end. In 1873 a new brick school house was erected on Vinal Avenue, and a brick hose house on Highland Avenue. The police department was improved and the fire department made more effective by the addition of a new horse hose carriage and equipments; UNUSUAL IMPROVEMENTS were also made in some of the main avenues, and the result of the year's labor seemed to be satisfactory to the community.

The year 1874 brought with it quite a change in the governing power. The executive officer during the two preceding years, having declined a re-election, the mayoralty was placed in new hands, and sixteen new members were also elected to the City Council.

The first important measures brought before them were the completion of the sewer in Miller's river district, and the filling up of the river as contemplated by the act of 1873, both of which were by the earnest efforts of the administration substantially completed at the close of the year.

The business of the police department had increased to such an extent that orders were passed to erect a new building for its accommodation, which was commenced in the fall of 1874.

An act to provide for a public park in the city of Somerville was approved by the Legislature March 25, 1874, and was at once brought to the attention of the City Council. The territory defined by the act consisted of some sixteen acres on the northerly side of the city, some three feet below the legal grade. Great pressure was brought to bear upon the government by both the friends and opponents of the measure, and it was earnestly contested with a result in favor of its friends, and the sum of \$200,000

was appropriated, to lay out and construct the same under the provisions of the act.

The work of purchasing the land and filling the same to a proper grade, was placed in the hands of appropriate committees, and their arduous labors were at once commenced.

To further perfect the working of the fire department, an act of the Legislature was procured, under date of April 24, 1874, and the department was subsequently reorganized in accordance therewith.

A fire alarm telegraph was established soon after, and was first put in operation June 17th, the same year.

The action of the administration relative to the public park, was the cause of disaffection among the opponents of the measure and at the election of city officers in December, 1874, it was made a political issue; but as the people had become more familiar with the merits of the measure it had grown in popular favor, and the action of the government was fully endorsed at the polls.

The officers of the government for 1875 were the same as for the year preceding, with the exception of three Aldermen and nine members of the Common Council.

The principal work devolving upon the administration of 1875, was the completion of the new police station, the construction of the public park, and the widening and grading of Broadway, the main avenue on the northerly side of the city. Each of these measures had much to do with the future prosperity of the city, and, therefore, received a large share of the attention of the City Council.

The police station was completed before the close of the year, and is a credit to the city. It is a brick structure with granite trimmings, located on Bow Street, and was fitted up for the special accommodation of the police court, police department, the Somerville Light Infantry and Overseers of the Poor, and also contains a hall of liberal dimensions for ward and city purposes.

The work on the public park and Broadway was carried on through the year, but was not completed at its close. Besides the

improvements above named, continued progress was made in extending the water supply and drainage of the city, in building brick sidewalks, completing new streets, and in improving the various school buildings.

For the government of 1876, the people made choice of Hon. Austin Belknap for mayor, two aldermen and five councilmen of the previous administration, and seventeen new members. Thus composed, the government was duly inaugurated on the 3d of January last.

The work of completing the public park seemed to be first in order, and the committee having the matter in charge were authorized to employ a skilful gardener, and the choice fell upon Hermann Grundel, Esq., the celebrated landscape gardener and florist, and under his and their supervision the territory heretofore alluded to, comprising some sixteen acres, situated much below the drainage level of the locality and rapidly becoming prejudicial to the public health, was made to "rejoice and blossom as the rose." On the 17th of June last it was formally dedicated to public use, and can hardly fail to be fully appreciated by a progressive community.

Somerville has just entered upon the thirty-fifth year of her existence, and what is her record to-day? She has a population according to the census of last year of 21,594, including a school population of 3708. A valuation made up at the same time of \$31,317,000, with twenty churches and societies, eighteen school buildings accommodating seventy-six schools, a public library of over 5000 volumes, upwards of 4000 dwellings, and nearly 300 stores and manufactories, with a police and fire department unexceptionable in men and material, and a military record that all should be proud of.

The city being located within easy reach of the capital of the State, almost encircled by popular lines of railroads, with natural elevations made historic, from which may be seen a landscape of unrivalled beauty, with gas and pure water in abundance, has induced many to leave the crowded cities adjacent and secure a residence within its limits; and rapid strides have been made in lay-

ing out new streets, and in the erection of dwellings of varied style of architecture, some of which are almost palatial in their surroundings and appointments. To satisfy the natural demands of this rapid growth, different branches of industry and trade have sprung up, and now the manufacturer, the mechanic and the tradesman here find encouragement to pursue the vocation they have severally adopted, and the hum of machinery, the din and clatter of the implements of the builder and the laborer, the stir and noise of the merchant and trafficker, are frequently heard in our midst, while those who heretofore tilled the soil for a livelihood within her borders, now find little space in which to operate or wield the implements of husbandry.

Somerville, it is seen, has much within her borders of historic interest, much to keep vivid in the memory of her citizens, those heroes the record of whose valorous deeds shines with a brighter lustre each anniversary of the nation's birth. Almost every acre of her territory is hallowed ground, made so by the events of over an hundred years ago. Stretching across what is now our city, from north to south, earthworks were formed to protect those brave men who stoutly resisted British aggression, and struggled manfully for that liberty and freedom which we now enjoy, and although more than a century has passed away since their formation, lines of these humble monuments are still visible on our hill tops, constantly reminding us of the sacrifices of those faithful and fearless men of 1775, which resulted "in giving a free and independent nation to the world."

In closing permit me to suggest, that, if the result of this centennial anniversary, which is being observed throughout the length and breadth of our land, should be to strengthen the bond which unites our people in one common brotherhood, and incites in us all a desire and determination to emulate the noble virtues of the honest yeomanry of an hundred years ago, the time, labor and money spent in the celebration, will not have been spent in vain.

Let us hope and pray then that such *will* be the grand and glorious sequel.

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